



Barbara Saunders Sims

Early Childhood Specialist, National Consultant

Bio-Sketch



Barbara Saunders Sims, has worked in the field of early childhood education as provider, director, educator, administrator and early childhood consultant in Head Start, Child Care, Child Welfare and Pre-K Programs for the past 40 years. Ms. Sims' mission is to improve family and child well-being through enhanced professional development, improvements to program quality, collaboration and advocacy activities. Her focus on early intervention programs in various aspects of her career have helped to promote optimal development among children, Birth to Age Five, primarily those with high risk factors.

Ms. Sims former position as regional child care administrator, in service for 8 years as Executive Director of the Early Learning Coalition of SW Florida, was mandated by the 1999 Florida School Readiness Legislation and the 2005 Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Education Legislation. In this capacity, Ms. Sims was charged with administration and oversight of all Federally-funded School Readiness programs for at-risk children, Birth to Age 8, and State-funded VPK Programs in SW Florida for all 4 year olds. Serving approximately 10,000 children in public, private, faith-based programs, in-home placements and family child care homes, Ms. Sims worked closely with stakeholders and public/private partners to strategically develop and implement a school readiness plan to provide a seamless system of services and supports in the SW Florida community, with the goal of increasing sustainable outcomes for children, youth, and families.

In her earlier work, Ms. Sims was the Family and Community Liaison for the Lee County School District Early Intervention and Head Start Programs and worked with the Dept. for Children and Families, Child Protection Agencies, pediatricians and parents to initiate parenting and support programs such as: Parents as Teachers Training; Home Visiting; Florida First Start; Even Start and Florida Strengthening Families to preserve and increase family strengths, enhance child development and reduce the likelihood of child abuse and neglect.

In her national consulting work, Ms. Sims played a leadership role in several state and national initiatives and pilots to support children and families with high risk factors connect with needed resources such as the US Army's *Give Army Parents a Break* Respite Child Care services project; *Florida Head Start Fatherhood Initiative* and the Florida State University Systems' Early Learning HUBS project. In these initiatives, Ms. Sims played a leadership role in grant writing, administration, research and development, strategic planning, cross-sector coordination and communication, training and technical assistance, outcome measurements and program evaluation and served as liaison between the state and federal funding agents and local implementation efforts.

Ms. Sims holds a Bachelor's Degree in English and Education from the College of New Rochelle, and a Master's Degree from Pacific Oaks College in Education Leadership, specializing in Early Childhood Education and Family and Community Support. Ms. Sims was awarded the National Head Start Fellowship in 1998 and worked in Washington, DC, in the Administration for Children and Families, Child Care Bureau, as a Regional Child Care Specialist.